

THE INSANE.

What Visitors Say of Their Treatment at Blackwell's Island.

SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS.

Reasons for Separating the Charitable and Correctional Institutions.

The recent statement made by the Commissioners of Charities and Correction concerning the alleged abuses at the Female Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island has resulted in drawing from nearly all the visitors to the charitable institutions criticisms of the sharpest description. It has been freely charged that the opinions and statements of the officials of the department were but a dimly and knowingly incorrect answer to the charges made. It is asserted by visitors that in regard to the cases of abuse and negligence occurring in this institution, and which have been published in the HERALD, no definite answer has been made by the officials of the lunatic asylum, who have merely contented themselves with a general answer to specific charges. They deny that a woman in hall No. 3 was injured eighteen months ago, the answer being: "The only such occurrence is the one of old Miss —, who has been an inmate of this asylum some fifteen years, and her history and record show that she has always been killed or starved, but is yet alive and well. She is the only one who has made a complaint of this kind, and she has done so without just cause."

In regard to this matter, the following is asserted by several visitors. First, that eighteen months ago a woman was injured in hall No. 3 of the Female Lunatic Asylum, under the circumstances before published. Second, that this patient is at the present time lying in the sick ward of the institution from the effects, remote, it is true, of such cruelty. Third, that despite the denials of the officers of the asylum, the case of cruelty and abuse can be established beyond question or doubt.

In reference to the assertion of the Medical Superintendent that the meals to the detached buildings are carried by men employed, for that purpose? a more deliberate denial is given on the authority of the visitors, official and unofficial, who make frequent visits to the asylum. Insane women, they say, are employed for this purpose, and can be seen any day, winter or summer, that the place is visited. It is also asserted by ladies who frequently examine the asylum that while it is true that in some cases it is difficult to keep shoes and stockings on insane women, still that the patients employed for carrying food are not of this class, or if they were they would not be given the freedom of the grounds.

THE DOCTORS AND THE NURSES.

Three respectable and trustworthy people have informed the writer that the statement of the officials of the asylum denying that several patients were bathed in the same water is untrue; that is the practice in the institution, and if the physicians are ignorant of such a system it is owing to their lack of proper supervision.

"It is true," one lady remarked, "the doctors may not know anything about this plan of some of the nurses to save themselves trouble, but when it is a general complaint on the part of the inmates of the asylum—a great many of whom are but slightly insane and perfectly clear on every point—it is not probable that the physicians are ignorant of such a system." And another visitor asserted that women all make the same statement independent of each other, it is because they are the inmates of a madhouse that their complaints shall not be listened to and counted as nothing.

Two visitors, however, asserted that the physicians are directly interested in suppressing the facts, yet their statements are taken without any effort to arrive at the truth. Some of these nurses have over twenty years' service, and their testimony is entirely worthy of belief.

They further asserted that there are many good women, of irreproachable character, in the asylum." Visitors complain that one of the greatest difficulties they meet in calling attention to any having received such treatment is to excite the suspicion of the physicians to come in conflict with the nurses on any subject they can avoid, as the attendants, by aiding each other and combining against the doctor, can give certain trouble, and in this way frequently have it put into their mouths that nurses, by party annoyances and deliberate disregard of their duties, have been able to secure the removal of the physicians. Unless the physician is willing and able to use the power given him, he very often falls a victim to the quiet but persistent efforts of those under his direction to get him out. Physicians know this, and as a general rule do not quarrel with the nurses.

THE FOOD QUESTION.

In regard to the dietary scale published as the bill of fare for one week at the Female Lunatic Asylum the term of the Western Union Telegraph Company against the New York and Erie Railroad Company for an order that Mr. Jewett, the receiver, pay the plaintiffs \$1,445 less expenses for provisions, or about \$44 for each inmate, or about eighty-four cents per head per week. According to this statement the Commissioners of Charities and Correction were able to give quite a full account of the sum for the sum of \$8,250,000, which was to be paid to the receiver, and the amount of the two contracts purporting to be supplied. This assertion is made on the very strongest authority, and it is stated by certain visitors to be capable of absolute proof.

One gentleman says: "Why, the assertion that the food supplied to the insane patients is on the scale given by the officials of the asylum, and published in the Special Sessions, expires on the 1st of May, and the competition for the vacancy has grown exceedingly lively. The salary is \$6,000 per annum, and the term lasts six years. The duties are light, and the position, in consequence, is regarded by the politicians as a choice one. The leading candidates for the office are the present members of the Joint Committee on Mental Diseases and the Federal Committee on the Insane, Major Robert P. Noyes, a member of the Tammany Hall General Committee, and at present Assistant Corporation Attorney.

application of all the measures of kindness and humanity and a constant effort to recover the recovery obtainable in each case." These will find no remedy of the mind (as disease of the body will find no remedy) in the taking of a mindless man.

CHARITIES AND CORRECTION.

To the important question, "Is it possible that the Board of Appointment will give the means to separate the charitable and correctional institutions?" the Commissioners gave the following answer:—"The separation of the charitable and correctional institutions would be an innovation in our system, which greater expense and trouble in its effect would be involved than the cost of the building itself, and ought not to be divided?" "It seems to me," remarked one of the official visitors, "that the statement on the part of the Commissioners is as important as it is interesting, and the action of the institution is to be commended, inasmuch as the institutions are now separated without employing Workhouse women of the lowest grade attending on the inmates? Would it not prevent Workhouse prisoners (males) from having around the grounds of the asylum? Would it not prevent the close relations that at present exist between the attendants of the two institutions? Such a change would place the lives of these unfortunate inmates in a much more comfortable condition, and would be of great benefit to the inmates of the asylum, who, if they were ever so willing, could not, owing to the large number of attendants, leave the institution, and go to the door of the outside world."

Workhouse men, it is said, do not own the right of political influence, and the selection of all who hold office under the department? As long as officials insult public intelligence in deliberately hiding their true and shadowy character, we must be slow in trusting the Commissioners—on Charities and Correction that the real condition of affairs on Blackwell's Island will be known."

A RAD SHOW.

A well known attorney of this city has stated that in his opinion "there was but one place worse than that island, crowded as it is with the criminals, paupers, sick and insane of this great city, thrown together like sick and dead men in a common tomb, and the place where the soul is lost." Arrived against the opinion of the Commissioners is the testimony of all the official State and local societies, who claim that no permanent benefit will ever be accomplished by the partial separation of the two classes of institutions taken alone. The friends of the Commissioners are all the prisons and some of the hospitals of New York—three large institutions on which are more than fifteen hundred inmates, and which are maintained at the expense of the State for the outdoor poor, the Bureau of Medical and Surgical Relief and the Charities for Children in this city. To supersede this immense charge three gentlemen have offices, two of whom are in the open air, and the third in a room, and the expenses of the two classes of institutions taken alone will be increased by the amount of the expenses of the Board being the only member who really "works full time." Yet in view of all these facts, and the testimony of men not directly interested in the welfare of the inmates, it is evident that many people are outspoken in their opinion that not only are the institutions under the department not correctly supervised, but that according to the present system there is little opportunity for the Commissioners to do so.

A European alienist claims:—1. That no hospital for the insane should receive more than 600 patients, and that the number of attendants should be proportional to the number of patients. 2. That every nurse should be assigned to a particular patient, and that no employment suited to each case should be provided as part of the means of cure. 3. That every item of daily life, the painting and ornamenting of the wards, the care of the patients, the food, the appointments of the table, the exercise, the amusements, the laundry services, should all be carefully used as means to the same end."

THE COURTS.

The divorce suit of Joseph Zuckerman against Joanne Zuckerman was yesterday referred by Judge Foster to Mr. George P. Smith. The parties are separated and the defendant is now residing in Germany.

Simon Herman brought a suit against ex-Sheriff Conner to recover \$152 46 upon an alleged false return to an execution in an action by Herman against Fritz Volp. On a trial before Judge Sanford a verdict was given for the full amount claimed, with interest. Mr. Max Moses appeared for the plaintiff and Messrs. Vandenberg, Green and Company for the defendant.

Hans J. J. Lederer, a lawyer, and John O'Connor, both deceased, were arrested yesterday by Detectives O'Connor and Field, of the District Attorney's office, on indications charging them with obtaining about \$6,000 worth of gold and silver from the safe of the Bank of America and from Charles T. Seymour, by representing themselves as financially sound, while, as alleged, they were at the time hopelessly insolvent.

The accused merchants were brought to the District Attorney's office, and a \$5,000 bail was set.

Hans J. J. Lederer and his wife, Rosel, who resided with their three children in Brooklyn street, were married ten years ago. A few months ago the husband accused his wife of infidelity, and after domestic trouble, she went to Frankfort, Austria, and was received, and in the absence of her husband took away the three little Jarets. Judge Potter yesterday, on application of Herman Steidle, granted a writ of habeas corpus and directed the mother to produce the child to court to-morrow when the merits of the case will be fully investigated.

Recently in a suit in the Marine Court, brought by the wife of Miss Ella Mead against John McMurry, engineer, with his wife, Anna, and son, John, as defendant, a verdict of \$600 damages for loss of services was obtained against the defendant. Miss Mead, through a guardian, has now commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court for damages on account of the loss of services.

Miss Mead, yesterday obtained from Judge Donohue an order for the defendant's second arrest, placing the case in the court to-morrow when the merits of the case will be fully investigated.

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